

Maine Is Technology

A publication featuring the Information Services technology of Maine State Government



CIO Update

By DICK THOMPSON, CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

The Information Technology (IT) community and its customers have lots to think about. Many changes have occurred with many more ahead. We, as a group, have organized in a way that can and likely will be emulated across other disciplines in State government.

Let's take a look at the last year. Two new, important policies were implemented. The **Portfolio Management Planning Process** has replaced the agency IT Plan as the document used to collect, evaluate and strategically prioritize investment in the technology assets of State Government. This system is in its infancy, but remains a strong catalyst for meeting the business objectives of the Administration and the agencies we serve.

Project Management is now a requirement on many of the initiatives underway and for all new development projects. This will provide the needed oversight and resources to be sure the State and its citizens get what we pay for. The message is clear to our vendor partners, we require a fair deal and quality work. The message is also clear that we must provide sufficient resources (business and IT) to meet our commitments in the project development process.

The most significant achievement I have seen, is the development of the **State Information and Technology Management Plan**. This blue print is intended to communicate to those we serve how we intend to govern ourselves and get the job done. It sets lofty goals and provides the Administration with a mechanism to impact IT strategically. Make no mis-

take, we are a significant and valuable portion of the State's infrastructure and assets.

The planning efforts I have described have been the result of hard work on the part of the senior Information Technology managers across the agencies and the Office of Information Technology (OIT).

Even as these management changes were occurring, Maine achieved:

- the first place ranking in the Best of the Web award program,
- second in the Digital State Government survey,
- brought two tough projects at the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) into line, with completion now in sight; and
- has continued (even expanded) efforts for cross agency collaboration.

One example of cross agency collaboration is the successful XML-based data sharing node project involving the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and Department of Health and Human Services' Bureau of Health in cooperation with the (federal) USEPA. Another project underway between the State Controller and the Department of Labor will build upon the time and attendance system to streamline

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GIS Maps Broadband Deployment

By AMY SPELKE, MPUC
& BOB BISTRAIS, MEGIS

The Maine Office of Geographic Information Services (MEGIS) and the Maine Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) have collaborated to bring information about broadband availability to the public by 1) mapping the availability of the most common forms of broadband throughout Maine, and 2) developing a web-based tool to enable customers to directly contact their local broadband providers. The project demonstrates how GIS may be used to develop on-line products that help citizens utilize important private and public resources.

Broadband service enables many applications including high-speed Internet, Internet telephone service, data transmission, and video. The availability of broadband service, particularly in rural areas, has become an issue of great national and local concern. The Maine Legislature and Governor Baldacci have both made broadband deployment in Maine a priority (see 35-A M.R.S.A. 7101(4)).

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some human resources and travel request processes. Maine Departments of Transportation and Public Safety continue to share resources in remote locations to provide data access to those who need it. The successes are frequent amongst many agencies, and they will continue.

The recent Executive Order on Information Technology¹ implements major portions of the Information and Technology Management Plan, including the development of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) Council. This group has been formed and is charged with providing advice, oversight, and resources to the CIO. The Office of the CIO and Bureau of Information Services have been merged to form a single cohesive unit. Additionally, a list of the CIO Council subcommittees and membership to address the direct requests of the Governor's Executive Order is forming. We have lots to do for sure.

Communication is extremely important to the success of managing change. A priority for me is to work with the CIO Council on effective and timely mechanisms to communicate and educate the IT community, our customers, and interested parties.

Though the Maine IS Technology newsletter has been very well produced issue after issue by Mary Cloutier and a fine editorial board, I am asking that the MIST in its current form be curtailed, at least for now — a hiatus so to speak. The expectation is to develop timely, direct communication to keep people up to date on our progress over the next weeks and months on the planning processes to meet the requirements of the Executive Order and proposed statutory change, IT initiatives, and successes across state government.

Please join me in giving Mary and the editorial board our thanks and admiration for a job well done over the years. Mary is currently working in our Strategic Division on many new things, so you will be hearing from her, I am sure.

¹ See AN ORDER CONCERNING EFFECTIVE APPLICATION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, January 6, 2005 <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/news/executive-orders/index.htm>

ACES - Still Young, but Impacting 270,000 Lives a Month

By JERRY MCCARTHY

As ACES (Automated Client Eligibility System) gains in age — it will soon be 30 months since roll-out — it continues to mature and improve and connect positively with thousands of Maine's citizens in need of medical, financial, food, child care and other assistance administered by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Maine's ACES was completed in 2002...the result of a several year planning and design effort of the Bureau of Family Independence. Keane, Inc., an IT consulting and design firm, was the primary contactor on the project. Replacing our 23-year-old Bull-housed legacy "WELFRE" system, ACES was to be a cutting-edged and web-based new standard for eligibility systems. An interactive interview and every day language were to replace data entry forms, complicated codes filling DOS style screens, and a clerk/terminal operator processing reams of information. A rules engine would use that information to cascade through nineteen potential program possibilities and offer a list of benefit types and levels. Best choices would be made and accepted, results would be immediate and notice was to be automatic. And ACES is all of that.

Immediately upon implementation and following a caseload conversion (automated mostly, but augmented a little with data not available in WELFRE), ACES began issuing benefits, and touching lives.

- Today ACES maintains medical assistance eligibility records for nearly 267,000 individuals in over 14 coverage groups. More than 17,500 MaineCare actions (openings, closings, coverage type changes) are made monthly in ACES.
- Today ACES issues nearly \$13.5 million monthly in Food Stamp benefits to 153,965 individuals in 79,755 households. The benefits are issued via EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) cards allowing clients immediate and discriminate access

at local markets and grocery stores. During the month of November, 2004, ACES processed nearly 16,000 Food Stamp actions such as openings, denials, changes and closings.

- Today, ACES issues over \$5,311,570 monthly in Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Parents as Scholars (PaS) benefits to more than 23,500 children in 13,796 households. These benefits are also issued by EBT card.
- ACES issues other monthly payments (State Supplement, Emergency Assistance, Alternate Assistance) of over \$450,200. These benefits are issued by check and

through an interface with MFASIS.

Noteworthy too is the fact that ACES provides case-management support for over 9,700 ASPIRE/PaS clients and handles the monthly issuance of a number of

ASPIRE Support Services totaling \$2,026,675 (for December, 2004), through that MFASIS interface.

Alas, ACES does generate some degree of user angst. It took a number of years to make WELFRE work as well as it did. And now some time is being required to get all of the kinks and cranks worked out of ACES...and all of the fixes, adjustments and improvements made. As improvements are implemented, and staff become increasingly familiar with all of the functionality of ACES, we will continue to reduce paperwork and forms, interview, case maintenance and decision-making time, and processing errors.

Certainly, ACES is not bad for a product built in two and half years. Systems involving this amount of data

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Efficiency Maine and GIS

By JOY ADAMSON, PUC

Efficiency Maine is a statewide effort to promote the more efficient use of electricity, help Maine residents and business reduce energy costs, and improve Maine's environment.

To achieve these goals, the following programs are implemented: State Building Program; Maine Energy Education Program; Business Program; ENERGY STAR Residential Lighting Program; Traffic Signal Replacement Program; Low Income Appliance Replacement Program; Maine High Performance Schools Program; and Training and Educational Program.

To ensure that Efficiency Maine is reaching the targeted audience, a geographic information system (GIS) is utilized. For example, Efficiency Maine uses a database to determine the towns in which participants of Maine's ENERGY STAR Residential Lighting Program and Business Program reside. In the ENERGY STAR Residential Light-

ing Program, the number of customers is organized by graduated symbols and overlays the town populations, represented by five population categories in a graduated color. (The ENERGY STAR Residential Lighting Program offers a \$2 instant rebate on ENERGY STAR qualified compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) and \$12 off ENERGY STAR qualified CFL fixtures and ceiling fans with integrated light kits.)

For example, certain towns that have considerable populations had a small percentage of residents purchasing CFLs and/or fixtures. With this information, Efficiency Maine can enhance its promotion of the ENERGY STAR Residential Lighting Program in that area.

With the right information and tools, GIS is a wonderful asset to dis-

The purpose of maintaining this information in a GIS database is to ensure the program opportunities and benefits are distributed evenly among the state's population and businesses.

cover where the target audience is and if the marketing is reaching them.

To find out more about these programs and see if you qualify, please visit the Efficiency Maine website: www.efficiencymaine.com.

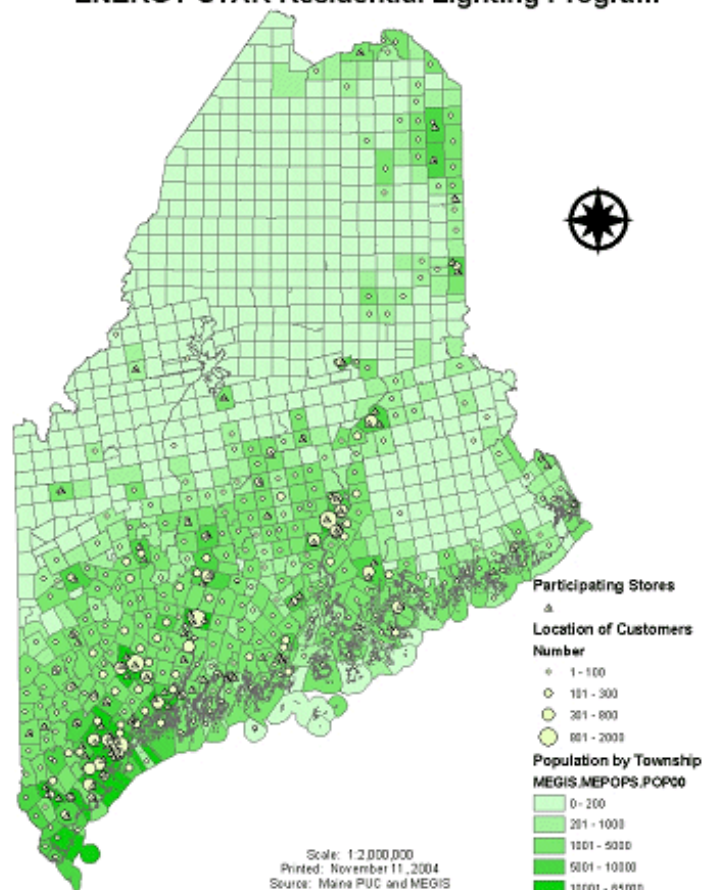
ACES, cont. from page 2

and complexity can cost many times more than the ACES implementation. ACES needed to be an economical system and it has been. ACES may not be the ultimate "multi-tasker" but it does come close. And just like that other "stuff", it is aging toward perfection.

Questions? Contact the author, who works in the Houlton office by calling 532-5067 or e-mailing Jerry.McCarthy@maine.gov.

A 30+ year veteran of the Department of Health and Human Services where he has experienced several technology advancements, Jerry is a Regional Program Administrator for the Bureau of Family Independence. He was one of several members of the State Team assisting with the development of ACES and became way too familiar with I-95 between Houlton and Augusta in the process! He continues to take great satisfaction from the fact that Aroostook County's hearty group of "can-do" staff was chosen to pilot test and implement the ACES application.

Efficiency Maine
ENERGY STAR Residential Lighting Program



Author Joy Adamson is a Utility Analyst at the Maine Public Utilities Commission. She may be reached with questions by e-mailing Joy.Adamson@Maine.gov or by calling 287-8350. In August 2004, Joy joined Efficiency Maine. Previously, she was a Source Water Protection Researcher and Planner for five years at the ME DHHS Drinking Water Program. Joy is a 1999 graduate of the University of Maine at Fort Kent, with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Studies. She and her husband live in Belgrade Village and enjoy four-wheeling, camping, and boating.

Mapping Broadband Deployment, cont. from page 1

Broadband services can be provided over several different technologies¹, and of these, the most widely available in Maine are cable modem and DSL service. Because the MPUC regulates telephone companies (though not DSL service per se) the MPUC began tracking broadband deployment by informally collecting information in 2003. This information was stored in an Excel spreadsheet and updated quarterly, but the MPUC did not have a process to disseminate it. Additionally, because of the diversity of technologies and providers, there was no single place where potential broadband customers could go to determine which services were locally available. At the Governor's request, the MPUC agreed to create, host, and maintain a web site to conveniently provide this information.

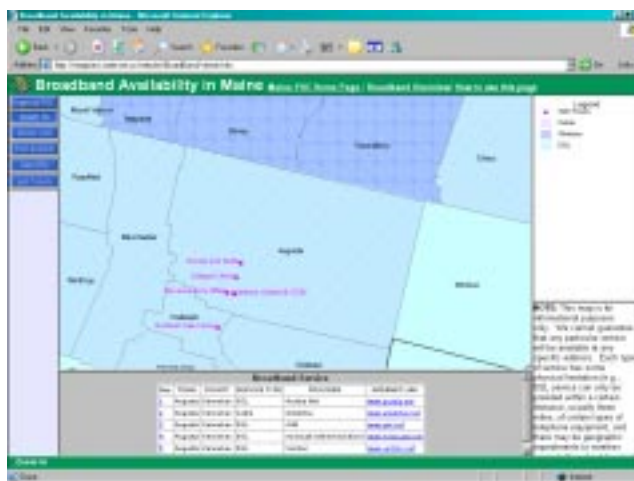
In October 2004, work started on creating a user-friendly web-based map. The MPUC's spreadsheet was reworked, geocode information was added, and the result was converted to Oracle by MEGIS in order to function with IMS (Internet Map Server). The data included in the final database includes county, municipality, geocode, type of service, provider name, and provider link.

The final application, see <http://MEGISims.state.me.us/website/broadband/viewer.htm>, also contains the location of wi-fi hot spots. A wi-fi hot spot is a small geographic area, ranging from one building to a small downtown area, from which you can access a wireless local area network (if you have a wireless card in your computer). For the purposes of this map the MPUC chose to include only those that are generally available to the public (with or without a fee). (We recognize that increasingly businesses and even residential customers are creating their own private wi-fi hot spots - some of which are available to the public.)

Wi-fi locations were mapped starting with the libraries that are members of the Maine State Library's Walk In Wireless in Public Libraries² program. The locations of these are fea-

tured in the MEGIS School and Library (SCHLIB) data layer. The results of a web search of advertised Maine wi-fi spots were also added. We learned of the Governor's plan to make his office a wi-fi hot spot and of the Legislature's intention to do likewise in the State House, and these sites were both included on the map. Wi-fi hot spots will have to be frequently updated as the technology catches on, and the use of the map becomes more widespread.

Basic map data for the IMS site was created by relating the data tables from MPUC to MEGIS data layers. This allows MPUC to update



the tables as needed, and the changes will immediately be reflected on the Internet maps. Once the GIS layers were prepared, MEGIS built an IMS web application using HTML and JavaScript technology, with the map data provided through IMS services.

Users may view broadband availability statewide, or zoom in to an area of interest. The availability of DSL, cable, and wireless service, as well as wi-fi hotspot locations, is depicted on the map. Users may also select a town from a pick list, which zooms the map to that town, and opens a list of local broadband service providers. The service providers' Internet links are included, and users may access a provider's website directly from the map application.

This application provides information on broadband providers in

multiple, user-friendly formats. The public and current and potential Maine businesses are the primary intended audience and beneficiaries of this site. MPUC staff will also use it to respond to inquiries regarding broadband availability, and it will help inform the Commission when it considers policy matters related to broadband deployment (DSL in particular). Finally, the site may also create competitive pressure for expansion of high-speed services both by spurring providers to match competitors service areas, and by generating demand from potential customers in proximity to a provider's current service territory. The application should also serve as an important resource for Maine's policy makers as they consider what further actions need to be taken to ensure that Maine's citizens participate fully in the information economy, which is increasingly dependent upon broadband services.

The MPUC acknowledges that the data may be incomplete, as service territories are expanding daily. MEGIS and the MPUC hope that the map web page will become so well used that providers will con-

tact us to update their information, and the MPUC invites providers to update information by sending an e-mail from the site.

There are undoubtedly many more GIS applications that can help bring important government agency information to the public. The cooperation between MEGIS and the MPUC on the broadband availability project may serve as a model to move these efforts forward.

Questions? Contact the authors. Amy M. Spelke, M.P.A. is a utility analyst at the Maine Public Utilities Commission, 207.287.5945 or amy.spelke@maine.gov. Bob Bistris is a senior programmer analyst at MEGIS, bob.bistris@maine.gov.

¹ e.g., Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) over telephone lines, cable, fixed wireless, satellite

² http://www.state.me.us/newsletter/july_aug_2004/walk_in_wireless_at_50.htm

FGDC Cooperative Agreement Program

By KATE KING

The Maine Office of Geographic Information Systems (MEGIS) applied for and won a 2004 Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) Cooperative Agreement Program (CAP) grant for "Metadata Trainer and Outreach Assistance".

2004 FGDC CAP grants support the implementation of six basic building blocks, common elements, for the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI): metadata, clearinghouse, standards, framework, geospatial data, and partnerships.

Maine GIS users, through the Maine GIS Executive Council and the Maine Library of Geographic Information, have supported MEGIS in the development of these common elements for the Maine GIS database, a geospatial library of thematic data layers for Maine. The collaborative effort has made GIS data, and technical support for the use of GIS, available to all levels of government, universities, private and public enterprise, and the general public.

MEGIS provides technical support to state agencies and the public for Maine GIS data and FGDC metadata. You are invited to call MEGIS for assistance with FGDC metadata, at (207) 624-9403.

For more information on the Maine GIS FGDC metadata initiative see <http://megis.maine.gov/standards> . View FGDC metadata and search Maine GIS data layers from the Maine GIS Internet Data Catalog, <http://megis.maine.gov/catalog> and <http://megis.maine.gov/metaweb/smms.asp> , or search the Maine GIS Clearinghouse from NSDI clearinghouse nodes nationwide at <http://edcw2ks15.cr.usgs.gov/fgdc/EDCgateway.html> or <http://edcw2ks15.cr.usgs.gov/servlet/FGDCServlet> .

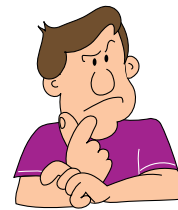
A graduate of the University of Maine Farmington in Interdisciplinary Geography and Geology, Kate King has worked as a GIS Coordinator for the Maine Office of GIS since 1996. Kate can be reached via email at kate.king@maine.gov or by phone at (207) 624-9403.



So what is metadata? What is FGDC metadata? And what does it mean for Maine GIS users?

Metadata is "data about data" or documentation. FGDC metadata is a standardized format for documentation of geospatial data. This standardized format helps to ensure that metadata content is searchable and answers the questions, who, what, when, where, how and why.

Maine GIS data layers are documented with FGDC metadata and published, through MEGIS, in the Maine GIS Internet Data Catalog. FGDC metadata for Maine GIS data layers also makes them accessible to the national clearinghouse nodes of the NSDI.



Challenge

By LESTER DICKEY

This Challenge is kind of "cheesy" but you should have no problem solving it to qualify for a cheese pizza of your choice. The names of three famous cheeses are "interlettered" in the following line. All the letters are in the correct order for each word. Find your cheeses!!

RLCOIMHQBEUUDERDFOGERRATR

For a similar challenger, but no prize, try unscrambling these cheeses:

DAUGO LOREVOPON

Please e-mail **Lester Dickey** with your answer and your name, phone number, and the organization for which you work. Or call **Barbara Buck** at **624-9501**. The winner will be drawn from all the correct entries and will receive a **FREE** donated pizza, either from **CJ's Pizza** or from the **EDOC Cafeteria**. All answers must be in no later than the **14th** of the month.

Last issue's challenge brought 80 submissions, with all having correct answers. The winner, chosen by random drawing, is **Joshua Atkinson** of **MRS**.

The answers to last issue's Challenge: Lime, orange, grape, cherry, lemon. The second challenge has them in alphabetical order.

Found On The Web!

Are you planning to fly out of Boston's Logan Airport anytime soon? If so, you will find the real time airport monitor showing arrivals, departures etc. for airplanes and helicopters at that airport very interesting. See <http://www4.passur.com/bos.html>.

Replace Passwords with Biometrics

By JIM TWOMEY & PAUL SAWYER

In today's security conscious environment, passwords don't provide the level of protection or identification that enterprise organizations demand. Not only can passwords be compromised, stolen, or simply forgotten, but password-based security can also frustrate users and consume untold hours of Help Desk and facilities support, costing your organization productivity and resources.

One of the Department of Professional and Financial Regulations' (PFR) organizational goals was to achieve and maintain a security posture that reduces risk levels associated with information security to an acceptable level. In addition to business-specific risks, PFR looked to meet or exceed both regulatory standards and the level of data security stipulated in contractual agreements and State policies.

To achieve these goals, PFR worked with CBE/ValCom to choose a biometric authentication solution to deliver a system that provides for highly secure end user access controls and authentication. Biometrics provide additional benefits such as reducing the cost of supporting end users particularly as it relates to password lock-outs and resets. In addition, the solution can lead to significant productivity gains for each end user, by eliminating downtime associated with the manual password entry authentication (estimated to be 44 hours/year/user on average according to leading industry research), and by virtually eliminating end user productivity losses during password lock-out scenarios.

The solution consisted of finger scanning biometric devices and middleware from SAFLINK. SAFLINK's non-proprietary approach allowed PFR the freedom to choose from different biometric technologies as well as more than 40 biometric hardware devices. This non-proprietary approach was taken advantage of since PFR soon found that no one biometric device works for all employees. More than one type of biometric device had to be brought in and validated for all employees' unique fingerprints to be recognized successfully.

One concern faced during the project rollout was end user belief that an actual fingerprint was being stored. What occurs during the scanning is

*In information technology (IT), **biometrics** usually refers to technologies for measuring and analyzing human physiological characteristics such as fingerprint, retina, and iris (anatomy), voice patterns, facial patterns, and hand measurements, especially for authentication purposes. Source: Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biometrics>*

that a mathematical equation is created based on points on the fingerprint. These points are called minutiae points. The only thing stored is the mathematical equation. It is impossible to recreate an actual fingerprint from the data points stored by the software.

CBE/ValCom continues to work with PFR and the Office of Information Technology in order to create a standard-based security infrastructure. CBE/ValCom, and its security division Firetower (www.firetower.com) is pleased to partner with the State of Maine on these emerging and critical security related projects.

Questions? Contact the authors. Jim Twomey is an Account Manager at CBE ValCom in South Portland. Contact him by calling 207-239-3092 or e-mailing jim.twomey@cbetech.com. Jim has worked for CBE/ValCom for 5 years and has been on the dedicated State of Maine Account Team for the past 4 years. Jim resides in Portland.

Paul A. Sawyer, Agency Technology Officer for PFR, may be reached at paul.a.sawyer@state.me.us with questions. Paul started work with Maine State government in 1969. He and his wife Kim live in Augusta, and make frequent trips to Phoenix to visit their granddaughter Jocelyn, and son Ryan, who is stationed at Luke Air Force Base.

State Web Site Wins Top Award

By SUSAN M. COVER – STAFF WRITER
BLETHEN MAINE NEWSPAPERS INC.

The state's Web site — <http://www.maine.gov> — has won first place in a competition judged by a California group.

Cathilea Robinett, executive director of the Center for Digital Government, presented Gov. John Baldacci with the award Thursday (2/27/05), saying Maine is the envy of state governments across the country. "Over half of the (state's) citizens use Maine.gov," she said. "That's unheard of anywhere else." Most states see 15% to 20% usage of their Web sites, she said.

For example, the state site is easy to use, features state and local government information, allows users to tailor the site to their needs, and encourages citizen participation through an "e-Democracy" portal. Also, there are more than 300 on-line services, including the chance to renew or replace a driver's license.

In addition to the first-place award, Robinett gave former Secretary of State Dan Gwadosky a Lifetime Achievement Award for his work on the Web site. "It was a bit of a risk when we first started," he said.

Gwadosky, who served as chairman of the board that oversees the Web site, said many people deserve credit for its success, including former Department of Administration and Finance Commissioner Janet Waldron and current Commissioner Rebecca Wyke. He urged the state to continue to make the site better for residents who may want to use it. "No matter what we do, there's more demand," he said. "It's a challenge for us all."

In remarks in the lobby of the Maine State Library, Robinett praised the state for asking for citizen input on the state budget and urged Maine to keep in mind the younger generation when making changes to the site. "You have the best Web site in the country," she said. "So many states want to know how you did it."

Statehouse reporter Susan M. Cover can be reached at scover@centralmaine.com or by calling 623-1056. This article is excerpted from one that was originally published February 28, 2005, and is reprinted courtesy of the Kennebec Journal.

New Webmaster Resouce Center

BY CARRIE GOTT –
INFORME GENERAL MANAGER

If you are interested in learning more about the Web policies, tools, resources and training available to state agencies free of charge to assist in creating and publishing web pages for Maine state government, the new and improved Webmaster Resource Center is for you: <http://www.maine.gov/webmasters/index.html>.

The Webmaster Resource Center provides agencies with information, training, software, and communication venues to enable efficient, high quality and consistent website development. Here are highlights of what you'll discover:

- Webmaster Group meeting agendas, presentations, trainings, and listserv
- Maine state website policies and standards
- Website Consistent Template Kit and tutorials
- More than 12 on-line request forms for such services as FTP accounts, listservs, bulletin boards, technical support, hosting and more
- Tutorials and Resources
- InforME software tools available to agencies at no cost, including AutoForms, What's New, LiveHelp, Google Search appliance, and more.
- On-line discussion forums for Webmasters and IT management
- And so much more.

Please visit the Webmaster Resource Center to see if there isn't something there useful to you.



Three New On-Line Services!

*In early January, the **Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR)** extended their on-line renewal service, **Maine Marine Licensing**, to include 15 additional marine license types. DMR now offers a total of 21 license types available for renewal at www.mainemarinelicensing.com.*

Over 65% of marine harvesting licenses sold by DMR are now renewable instantly over the Internet.

Along with its 8,000 lobster and crab harvesters, 4,300 more fishermen now have the convenience of renewing their licenses on-line. The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the 2005 renewal period, which runs through December 31, 2005 for most licenses.

The Maine Department of Labor has launched a new on-line service for filing of initial claims for Unemployment Insurance Benefits.

Maine residents who have lost their jobs can now apply for unemployment 24 hours a day, seven days a week with the new Internet-based system. The site can be accessed from any computer connected to the Internet at www.file4ui.com or by visiting the Maine Department of Labor website at www.maine.gov/labor.

"This service makes the unemployment system more accessible and efficient for workers needing to file a claim," said Maine Labor Commissioner Laura Fortman. "Individuals can file from their home computers or by accessing public computers at the CareerCenter.

Nearly 2,000 on-line claims have been taken since December when the service was phased in. In order to use the service, an individual must have worked in Maine, or served in the military within the past 18 months, and have not filed a claim for unemployment benefits against another state within the past 12 months. Applicants will need to provide a Social Security number or Alien Registration number, the name, address and telephone number of each business they worked at during the past 18 months, and the jobs held and dates worked at each employer during that 18 month period. Claimants who wish to file initial claims by phone may access the Unemployment Claims Center at 1-800-593-7660 or TTY: 1-888-457-8884.

The web page adds to the list of interactive products available to job seekers and business on the Maine Department of Labor web site. Other on-line services for job seekers include labor market information and access to a national database of job postings. On-line services for employers include free job listings through the CareerCenter, labor market information, and free labor posters and publications.

Secretary of State Launches On-line Driving Record Service

In early December public motor vehicle driving records in Maine became available through a new on-line service offered by the Bureau of Motor Vehicles in cooperation with the Information Resource of Maine (InforME).

Public driving records requested through this new on-line service (<http://www.informe.org/bmv/drc/>) contain three years of driver history. The federal Driver's Privacy Protection Act of 1994 (DPPA) provides an important safeguard to ensure that only public information, is released on a driving record. An individual's address and social security number are not public and are not released. The on-line service follows the same standards as the existing mail and fax services for driver records. All services adhere to the rules of DPPA to protect the privacy of Maine's drivers while simultaneously providing access to public information.

The cost to purchase driver history records on-line is \$7 per report. The on-line service costs the same or, in some cases, less than a faxed report. To access any report, requestors will need to provide either the driver license number or the name and date of birth of the individual for whom the record is being requested. Payment may be made with a credit card.

Using Technology to Improve Customer Service and Save Money

New technology at the Department of Conservation has enabled us to overcome time and distance challenges to most effectively utilize our workforce. This year, for the first time, our Bangor employees can stay local, while helping with the anticipated surge of campground reservations.

Conservation's campground reservation system commences business each February for the upcoming camping season. To date, reservations for all state park campgrounds are made in Augusta by walk-in, mail-in, phone-in, or Internet. On-line reservations, as you might expect, are increasing dramatically each year (<http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks/reservations/>).

Keeping up with the demand for campground reservations is a challenge, especially during two "surge" periods each year. The first surge occurs annually in February, and the second is in the June to July timeframe. Historically, Conservation met the challenges of the surge periods by either

1) hiring and training temps in Augusta for the surge times (an expensive solution, which resulted in reservations being taken by individuals only generally familiar with our parks¹), or

2) transferring employees from "the field" to the Augusta headquarters to staff the telephones and computers for this period. (This solution also incurs costs, and disrupts the home lives of our employees².)

Thanks to technology and savvy leadership, this February it will be different!

BY TOM DRISCOLL



Earlier this winter, the Department's Information Systems team worked with the Bureau of Parks and Lands' business team to determine what improvements could be made to the current campground request business processes. The solution, driven by the IS team, will be to use existing staff and equipment in Bangor to remotely access the computer application served from Augusta.

This solution is now technically possible as the SQL/MS Access reservations application is served to users via a small in-house Citrix database server. Additionally, bandwidth from the newly renovated Harlow building (Fall 2004) also enables us to connect central applications real-time to our (T-1 bandwidth) field offices. Now Bangor employees are technologically enabled to work "virtually" in Augusta, and remain physically 75 miles to the north.

Without the current technology (sufficient bandwidth, and Citrix-serving of the reservations application), and the computer staff to implement this opportunity, this business solution and its savings would not be possible. Kudos also goes to the new

Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."
— President Theodore Roosevelt

Parks and Lands Bureau director, David Soucy of Fort Kent, who actively seeks creative technological solutions to business problems.

Because we have the technical ability to access the reservations system from any of our Parks regional headquarters (Bangor and Hallowell) via the Wide Area Network, we decided to utilize our existing people, offices, computers and phones, where we have them. We will tackle the increase in on-line reservations using what we have, and where we have it – just as President Roosevelt recommended.

Tom Driscoll is the Agency Technology Officer for the Department of Conservation. He recently returned from a fifteen month camping trip to Iraq in 2003 (without a reservation). For more information see http://www.state.me.us/newsletter/dec2003/holiday_wishes_overseas.htm. Contact him with questions by e-mailing tom.driscoll@maine.gov or calling (207) 287-2610.

¹ Bringing in "outside" assistance requires a significant amount of training.

² This solution requires Bangor and other field employees to take time away from primary duties, incurs travel and meal expenses, and possible overnight accommodations expense. In addition it creates challenges regarding outfitting office space at the Harlow headquarters to accommodate them for the surge periods.

TRANSITIONS

TECHNOLOGY PERSONNEL CHANGES IN YOUR AGENCY?

SEND NOTICES TO mary.cloutier@maine.gov TO HAVE THEM POSTED HERE.

Mike Howe, Sr., Programmer Analyst in the MFASIS Group, is retiring from state government effective January 1, 2005, after approximately 30 years of state service.

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